

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A computer system for hosting an on-line travel planning application containing a search value program to facilitate selection of travel itineraries, the computer system comprising:
 - a central processing unit; and
 - a storage unit connected to said central processing unit for storing said search value program thereon, wherein said search value program is configured to:
 - allow a traveler to select a travel criteria and to set traveler preferences therefor in a traveler profile,
 - derive preference factors including a lowest fare multiplier, an available dates index, a non-stop service index, and an equipment type index for said travel criteria based on said traveler preferences,
 - initiate a query of at least one travel information database for itineraries matching said selected travel criteria using an on-line search engine,
 - calculate a travel value index for each itinerary using a travel value algorithm that subtracts preference factors from, or adds preference factors to, or both, an optimal value of said travel value index depending on said criteria matching itineraries, and
 - return only itineraries where said travel value index thereof satisfies a traveler defined threshold.

1 2. The computer system according to claim 1, wherein said search value
2 program is further configured to cancel before final completion of said query any
3 itineraries that cannot satisfy said traveler defined threshold.

1 3. The computer system according to claim 1, wherein said search value
2 program is a Web based application.

1 4. The computer system according to claim 1, wherein said search value
2 program allows said traveler to select said travel criteria and set said travel preferences
3 via the Internet.

1 5. The computer system according to claim 1, wherein said travel value
2 algorithm is defined in a manner such that an optimal value for said travel value index is
3 approximately 100 percent.

1 6. A method for facilitating selection of travel itineraries, comprising:
2 selecting a travel criteria;
3 defining a traveler profile containing traveler preferences associated with said
4 travel criteria;
5 deriving preference factors including a lowest fare multiplier, an available dates
6 index, a non-stop service index, and an equipment type index for said travel criteria based
7 on said traveler preferences,

8 initiating a query of at least one travel information database for itineraries
9 matching said selected travel criteria using an on-line search engine,
10 calculating a travel value index for each itinerary using a travel value algorithm
11 that subtracts preference factors from, or adds preference factors to, or both, an optimal
12 value of said travel value index depending on said criteria matching itineraries, and
13 returning only itineraries where said travel value index thereof satisfies a traveler
14 defined threshold.

1 7. The method according to claim 6, further comprising canceling before
2 final completion of said query any itineraries that cannot satisfy said traveler defined
3 threshold.

1 8. The method according to claim 6, wherein said travel value algorithm is
2 defined in a manner such that an optimal value for said travel value index is
3 approximately 100 percent.